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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 ABUJA 001000

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE

DEPARTMENT FOR INL/AP-JSULLIVAN

DEAHQS FOR OFE-LORINO

E.O. 12598: N/A

TAGS: [SNAR](#) [CJAN](#) [PREL](#) [NI](#)

SUBJECT: Lunch Conference on Drugs and Financial Crimes

SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED -- PROTECT ACCORDINGLY.

1. (SBU) SUMMARY: The President's Special Advisor on Narcotics and Financial Crimes, Dr. Ibrahim Lane hosted a three hour lunch and meeting on drugs and related crimes on April 19. Media questioned Dr. Lane, Attorney General Bola Ige and NDLEA Chairman Lafiaji, among others, on current crime and drug-related issues. A frank discussion with media present, was led by the AG. All agreed the forum should continue, and the AG called on Lane and the NDLEA to organize a separate meeting to develop a blueprint for Nigeria's cooperation on fighting drugs and related money-laundering. Tony Esu, Chairman of the House Committee on Narcotics and Financial Crimes, confirmed the report that 10 members of his Committee were touring Washington and Baltimore on National Assembly funds. END SUMMARY.

2. (SBU) RNLEO and Lagos DEA Representative attended a lunch meeting hosted by the President's Special Advisor on Narcotics and Financial Crimes, Dr. Ibrahim Lane. Other notable attendees included the Attorney General Bola Ige and NDLEA Chairman Lafiaji. Media was present throughout the event, and the discussions were remarkably frank.

3. (SBU) EXTRADITION AND RENDITION: Several of the media's questions focused on the questions of extradition to the U.S. of Nigerian citizens. In a response to a general question on whether extraditions to the U.S. are "right or ethical," the AG responded that "no extradition has taken place without due process of law." Another reporter made the allegation that the turning over to United States custody of four Nigerians last November was extra-legal. Ige responded by noting that "this was not an extradition" and stating that "there are ways to move people from one country to another" without using the formal extradition process. The Minister of State for Justice made the follow-on point that extradition or rendition was not an act of determining guilt of a suspect for a crime. He cited the recent trial of two Libyans on charges relating to the bombing of Pan Am 103 as an example of how two suspects were extradited to another country, given a fair trial, and one was acquitted and free to return home. The AG had the final word by asking the media rhetorically: "Should Nigeria become a haven for those who commit serious crimes?"

4. (SBU) EXPANDING INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION: During the 45-minute discussion chaired by the AG, RNLEO, DEA Country Attache, the UNDCP Regional Representative, and the UK Drug Liaison Officer joined about 20 Nigerian officials (from Lane's office, NDLEA, the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN), the Nigerian Deposit Insurance Corporation (NDIC) and the Police) in a frank exchange of views on what could be done to improve Nigeria's efforts to address drug trafficking and financial crimes. DEA Attache suggested that the GON, through the NDLEA, create a mechanism for expanded regional anti-drug, anti-crime cooperation, particularly with regard to the sharing of timely intelligence on trafficking activities. All agreed that the discussion should continue. RNLEO suggested that a future meeting could be dedicated to money laundering issues, which everyone appeared to accept. The AG called on Lane and the NDLEA to organize a separate group, including the CBN, NDIC, Police and NDLEA to meet with the U.S. Embassy, British High Commission and UNDCP to develop a blueprint for Nigeria's cooperation with the international community on fighting drugs and related money laundering.

5. (SBU) NATIONAL ASSEMBLY TRAVEL: On the margins of the discussion, RNLEO managed to speak with Tony Esu, Chairman of the House Committee on Narcotics and Financial Crimes

about an email report from INL that 10 members of the Committee were touring Washington and Baltimore on National Assembly funds. Esu confirmed the report, and claimed the group is looking into demand reduction programs, and will meet with ONDCP on Monday. RNLEO had heard from INL that all, including the Nigerian Embassy in Washington, were caught unaware of the travel. (Note: Esu called RNLEO on April 27 for assistance with visas for five of his committee members making two return visits to the U.S. for conferences on Financial Crimes -- one in Los Angeles -- within the next three weeks. end note)

16. (SBU) Comment: This initiative by the AG, NDLEA Chairman and President's Special Advisor represents a good sign and an uncommon, transparent and important approach to counter-narcotics and financial crimes that we have not seen here before.
JETER